

## **FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET**

**Meeting Date:** March 12, 2018

**Agenda Item:** Letter to the Bureau of Reclamation regarding the Bighorn River below Yellowtail Dam

**Action Needed:** Endorsement

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 10 Min

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### **Background:**

In 2008, the Bureau of Reclamation enacted water management practices that have greatly damaged the Bighorn River fishing industry as well as agricultural producers and landowners along the river. In an effort to achieve a certain lake level by Memorial Day weekend, the Bureau of Reclamation has negatively impacted the recreational and agricultural businesses along the river. Likewise, the extreme flows complicate the study and management of fish in the Bighorn River.

The current record snowpack will guarantee high flows into Yellowtail Dam and without an immediate adjustment to the lake, the Bighorn River will most certainly experience damaging high flows.

The Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission is required to responsibly manage Montana's fish and wildlife and to preserve and promote opportunities for hunters and anglers. Likewise, the Commission is obligated to cooperate with and support Montana landowners and agriculture producers.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results:**

Members of the public have contacted Commissioners directly asking for the Commission's involvement. Public comment will be taken at the teleconference meeting.

### **Proposed Motion:**

I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission endorse the action of a letter being sent to the Bureau of Reclamation asking the Bureau of Reclamation to recognize the harm being caused to river users, businesses and landowners as a result of its management procedures and ask it to take immediate corrective action.